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Draft report

Addendum

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III. Integrated global management

Introduction and overview

1. At its 476th and 477th meetings, on 11 and 12 September respectively, the Committee on Conferences considered the report of the Secretary-General on the pattern of conferences, section II, concerning integrated global management (A/61/129, paras. 2 to 12). Progress had been made by the task forces established under the integrated global management project in identifying and harmonizing/standardizing common approaches to administrative policies, practices and procedures across the four duty stations of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management at New York, Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi. The seventh Coordination Meeting of Conference Managers, held at Vienna in June 2006, had reached new agreement in the areas of proactive document management, capacity calculations, a common terminology database for language staff and computer-assisted translation.

2. A non-paper on the information technology global initiative was circulated, highlighting the major findings of a study conducted across the four duty stations with the help of a consultancy firm. In response to the recommendations from the study, an information technology governance board under the Assistant Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management was established, along with three project teams to launch a centrally hosted reporting database, to further integrate the current meetings management system across the duty stations and to conduct a technical evaluation with a view to standardizing the document management systems at all duty stations.

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Discussion

3. Delegations welcomed the progress made and looked forward to seeing the compendium of information on the results of the task forces established in 2004-2005. One delegation was of the view that the integrated global management initiative could be considered successful if it ensured a balanced division of labour among the four duty stations. Progress in implementation of many of the Department's initiatives was noted, but some delegations felt that innovations should be introduced in an evolutionary way, with the main emphasis on improving quality of services. In reply to the concerns expressed by a number of delegations regarding computer-assisted translation (CAT) and its effect on quality and accuracy, a representative of the Secretariat stressed that such tools were not to be confused with machine translation. They could be useful when applied to the 25 to 30 per cent of the translation workload that could be considered repetitive, providing translators with a database of previously translated material which they were free to accept or reject as appropriate.

4. It was emphasized that the global management project was a continuous process and that some of its components, such as a standardized methodology for calculating capacity and workload sharing and the common terminology database, were not yet a reality. In reply to questions raised in the discussion, a representative of the Secretariat said that the terminology coordination board rotated the chairmanship among the duty stations. The regional commissions were also interested in joining the process and had become full members. Although the membership of that board did not currently cover each official language, the terminology specialists in each duty station could be consulted when necessary.

5. Several delegations stressed that the funding of the central planning and coordination function in Nairobi from the regular budget was crucial in order to ensure parity across duty stations, while one delegation did not favour that action. While some delegations considered that integrated global management was a departmental initiative that could be implemented as the tools became available, one delegation believed that a mandate from the General Assembly was required.